REMARKS

Claims 1-5 and 7-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over French (U.S. Patent No. 3,913,645) in view of Hashimoto (JP 6-270,617). In response, Applicant amended independent claim 1 to include a feature of only a reinforcement rubber layer being inserted between a bottom of the retention groove and the carcass layer, and respectfully traverse. Claim 4 is rewritten into independent form. Applicant traverses the rejection of claim 4 because there is no motivation to combine French and Hashimoto.

Since claim 1 now generally incorporates the features of previous claim 6, wherein a reinforcement rubber layer is inserted "only" between a bottom of the retention groove and the carcass layer, for at least this reason the rejection of claims 1-3 and 7-9 is believed to be overcome.

With respect to independent claim 4, Applicant respectfully submits that there is no motivation to combine the references. This is because French provides no technical idea of providing a run-flat support. French merely teaches that when air in a pneumatic tire escapes during running, there is provided recesses for lubricant retention on each surface of the shoulder portion (FIG. 1, B, C) and the sidewall bottom portion (FIG. 1, A, D), which become in contact with each other on the inner peripheral surface of the pneumatic tire. When a run-flat support is provided in the tire of French, there is no contact between the shoulder portion and the sidewall bottom portion during driving of a run-flat tire.

Hashimoto merely discloses a run-flat support that is T-lettered type. Accordingly, the run-flat support which contacts with the inner peripheral surface of the pneumatic tire is shaped as a flat support having a width corresponding to a width of a crown portion. For this reason, a lubricant layer is provided with an equal thickness in an entire region corresponding to the width of the crown portion. (See FIGs. 1 and 2 in Hashimoto). Accordingly, there is no disclosure or suggestion in Hashimoto to provide a retention groove for a lubricant in a specific place. Moreover, since in French's tire there is no contact between the shoulder portion of the sidewall bottom portion, there is no motivation to modify French by including a run-flat support of Hashimoto since the non-contacting portions fdo not need such a support. For these reasons, withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection of claims 1-5 and 7-9 is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-5 and 7-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Hashimoto in view of French. Applicant traverses the rejection for the reasons recited above.

Since the features of claim 6 are generally incorporated into independent claim 1, Applicant traverses the rejection of claims 1-3 and 7-9 for at least this reason. With respect to independent claim 4, as discussed above, Hashimoto's run-flat support is T-lettered shaped, and fails to disclose or suggest a retention groove for lubricant on an inner peripheral surface of a pneumatic tire. Moreover, in French's tire there is no contact with the shoulder portion of the sidewall bottom portion during a run-flat operation. Accordingly, there is no motivation to modify Hashimoto to include the run-flat support of French in such a

combination as discussed above. For these reasons, withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Kobayashi (U.S. Patent No. 4,848,431), and further in view of Hashimoto and French. In response, Applicant traverses the rejection for the reasons recited above, and also because none of the cited references disclose or suggest a run-flat support member having at least two apexes, wherein a retention groove is faced to each of the apexes of the run-flat support member, as now recited in amended claim 1.

According to claim 1 of the present Application, an additional load added to a support member during run-flat operation can be distributed and lubrication can be effectively performed between the apexes and the inner peripheral surface of the pneumatic tire. Advantageously, run-flat durability can be improved. Furthermore, only a reinforcement rubber is inserted between the bottom of the retention groove configured for receiving the lubricant and a carcass layer, resulting in run-flat durability being improved.

As discussed above, French provides no technical concept of a run-flat support. French does not have any contact between the shoulder portion and the sidewall bottom portion during a run-flat operation.

Hashimoto merely has the T-shaped run-flat support. However, this type of run-flat support does not have two apexes, as now recited in amended independent claim 1. Instead, the run-flat support of Hashimoto that is in contact with the inner peripheral surface of the tire is a flat support having the width equal to that of the crown portion. Since the

lubricant layer is provided with an equal thickness in the entire region corresponding to the width of the crown portion, there is no disclosure or suggestion in Hashimoto to provide any retention groove for lubricant in any particular place.

Kobayashi merely discloses that a rubber layer 5 is arranged between an upper carcass layer 4u and a lower carcass layer 4d as shown in FIG. 1. (See col. 2, lines 55-56). However, neither French, Hashimoto nor Kobayashi, alone or in combination, disclose or suggest a rubber reinforcement layer that is inserted only between a bottom of the retention groove and a carcass layer. For all these reasons, the rejection of independent claim 1 and its respective dependent claims is traversed.

As discussed above, claim 4 is also traversed because there is no motivation to combine French and Hashimoto. Additionally, Kobayashi merely discloses a location of the rubber layer between the upper and lower carcass layers. However, there is no motivation to combine Kobayashi with French since French fails to have the shoulder portion and side wall bottom portion in contact with each other during run-flat operation. Thus, one skilled in the art would not modify Kobayashi based on French. Therefore, there is no motivation to modify Kobayashi using the teachings of Hashimoto and French. For these reasons, withdrawal of the §103(a) rejection is respectfully requested.

For all of the foregoing reasons, Applicant submits that this Application is in condition for allowance, which is respectfully requested. The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney if an interview would expedite prosecution.

If a Petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) for an extension of time for response is required to make the attached response timely, it is hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) for an extension of time for response in the above-identified application for the period required to make the attached response timely. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required to this Application under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 07-2069.

Respectfully submitted,

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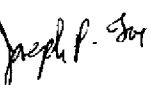
By 
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